

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JERUSA 01147 201116Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 814
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T JERUSALEM 1147

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, PBOR, UNSC, IS, LE, XF
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: LEBANESE ARMY

REF: (A) STATE 101005, (B) BEIRUT 2212

1. SIILASVUO WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO HAVE LEBANESE ARMY UNITS, EVEN IN SYMBOLIC NUMBERS, IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. HE BELIEVES IT IS NECESSARY FOR GOL TO BEGIN TO REESTABLISH ITS AUTHORITY IN THE AREA. MOREOVER, HE CONSIDERS UN IS VULNERABLE VIS-A-VIS POSSIBLE COMPLAINTS FROM TROOP CONTRIBUTORS IF LEBANESE ARMY UNWILLING TO RUN AT LEAST SOME RISKS, TO SAY NOTHING OF THOSE RUN BY FRENCH AND OTHER UNIFIL CONTINGENTS FACING HEAVILY ARMED PALESTINIANS.

2. IN PRESSING FOR INITIAL MOVEMENT OF THREE COMPANIES, SIILASVUO HAS CONSISTENTLY SOUGHT TO OVERCOME VARIETY OF DIFFICULTIES CITED BY GOL. WHEN USE OF THE COASTAL ROAD SEEMED RISKY, HE WAS WILLING TO HAVE LAF COMPANIES MOVE THROUGH BEKAA VALLEY IF NEPALESE HAD LANDED AT RAYAK.

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HE WAS ALSO WILLING TO HAVE UNIFIL UNITS MOVE WITH LAF AND TO CONSIDER VARIOUS MEANS OF SUPPLY.

3. GIVEN NEGATIVE POSITION ADOPTED BY SARKIS APRIL 17, SIILASVUO'S CURRENT ASSESSMENT IS THAT HE WILL NOT GET ARMY UNITS ANY TIME SOON. IN THE MEANTIME, HE IS PRESSING FOR SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL GENDARMES, INDICATIVE

OF HIS CONTINUING STRONG DESIRE FOR ARMY UNITS IS HIS TALK OF HAVING GENDARMES DRESSED IN ARMY-TYPE UNIFORMS TO HELP CREATE IMPRESSION OF TANGIBLE GOL PRESENCE IN THE AREA. (COMENT: I BELIEVE SIILASVUO HAS NOT EVEN DISCUSSED THIS WITH HIS STAFF IN JERUSALEM SO REQUEST IT NOT BE MENTIONED TO LEBANESE AT PRESENT, ASSUMING THAT IT MIGHT BE PRACTICAL.)

4. SIILASVUO RELATED CURIOUS BIT OF BY-PLAY WHICH AMBASSADOR PARKER MAY BE ABLE TO INTERPRET. DURING APRIL 17 MEETING, BOUTROS COMMENTED "GENERAL SIILASVUO ALWAYS HAD ILLUSIONS ARMY UNITS COULD BE INTRODUCED WITHOUT COMPLICATIONS." AFTER MEETING BROKE UP, SIILASVUO REPORTEDLY TOOK BOUTROS ASIDE AND SAID HE HAD BEEN UNDER NO ILLUSIONS WHATSOEVER, BUT INSTEAD HAD TRIED TO OVERCOME OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH LAF DEPLOYMENT.

5. SIILASVUO IS ATTENDING A COMMANDER'S CONFERENCE IN NAQOURA AND WILL NOT BE BACK UNTIL TOO LATE TO REPORT IN TIME FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER'S ANTICIPATED MEETING WITH SARKIS. I AM CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT ABOVE IS AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF HIS CURRENT VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.

6. RE BEIRUT 2237 JUST RECEIVED, I WILL CONVEY INVITATION WHEN SIILASVUO RETURNS.

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